BLUE CHINA COLLECTING A FASCINATING FAD

View of Belvoir Castle.

A Page for Misses

VERY few girls there are but have the nucleus of a collection of "old blue" china in their possession. It may be nothing more than a quaint sugar bowl that has been handed down as an heirloom from a great-grandmother, or a curious historical plate once owned and cherished by some Colonial ancestor, now cracked and crazed possibly, but yet dear because of its associations and the gorgeous lapis color that bedecks its face, that is to be the nestor of the precious hoard by and by. But whatever it may be that arouses an interest and stimulates a desire to know more about grandmother's china matters little so long as its mission is fulfilled.

In every household where the precious blue china reposes in cabinet or cupboard tales without number have been told of its wanderings since it first left the potter's hands—tales that have become traditions in the family, though perhaps the girl who is the actual possessor of it knows little of its history from actual research.

But if she is to fall heir to even a small hoard of the precious stuff or contemplates starting a collection on her own account it behooves her to make herself familiar with the hall marks of old Staffordshire, for with each year that passes a higher value is placed on these precious relics of the past and honest specimens are every day more difficult to acquire.

It is a laudable ambition, that of china collecting. It was the fad of many a Colonial housewife, and most of the fine specimens that have come down to us today have been the pride of the heart of some good dame of olden days. Mrs. George Washington herself possessed a great fondness for fine china, as the splendid collection at Mount Vernon testifies. It seems to go with all the fine housewifely virtues that the first President's wife possessed, for it savors of all things domestic—the hearth, the home and the hospitable board.

Not all the old blue china that is offered for sale has a value. Some has nothing to recommend it but its decorative qualities and its bright hue, so that if a girl means to make a collection, even in a small way, it were best to learn the marks by which the genuine can be distinguished from that which is spurious, and the antique from the modern.

TO begin with, it might be said that Staffordshire comprises a certain district in England, about ten miles in length, where nearly all the famous potteries of that country are gathered. It was here that the first pottery was made, and the names of the towns, Stoke on Trent, Henley, Cobridge, Burslem, Fenton, Tunstall, Shelton, Longport, Lane End and so on, where the oldest Staffordshire was potted, are still known as the homes of fine china.

It is difficult to-day for the collector to find a set of Staffordshire intact, for though it was made in dinner and tea sets, they have been long since broken up and divided among families, so that only odd pieces in the shape of platters, plates and pitchers are to be found. As a matter of fact, plates never accompanied a dinner or tea set in the early days. They came in sets by themselves. Teapots, of which some collectors make a specialty, are found in a number of quaint and interesting styles. Now and then a fine old punch bowl, about which many memories cluster, comes to light, but plates, platters and pitchers bearing scenes of historical interest are most common and are to be picked up here and there for various prices, according to the personal value put upon them by the owners.

Of course, seasoned collectors can tell almost at a glance whether a piece of china is genuine or a reproduction, but the novice must follow the sign posts, which are known to point to the various works of old Staffordshire potters, and while it takes time to become familiar with the hallmarks of these old time workers in clay, still it is by no means difficult to learn the emblems and devices by which they can be distinguished.

Each of the early potters had some mark that distinguished his work from that of his contemporaries or his successors. For example, the work of Enoch Wood, who is called the Father of Pottery, which is in great demand, had several features by which his designs were known. One was the shell border with an irregular centre, like the entrance to a grotto, with the name of the view generally inscribed on the face of the design. Another was a border in which scroll medallions containing inscriptions were introduced, while a third brought iris, hollyhocks and grapes into the border design.

SOME very charming scenes of the Hudson, together with a series of picturesque views of the various towns along its banks, were produced by Wood. One of his celebrated pieces is that of a dinner set commemorating the second century of the founding of the Colonies and was decorated with the "Landing of the Pilgrims." This is surrounded with the scroll and medallion border.

One of the rarest of Wood's plates is that showing the opening of the Erie Canal, October 25, 1825. In this series are three views of Rochester, Little Falls and Albany. Another famous plate is that of Castle Garden and the Battery. Altogether there are probably forty or more views of American scenes, all of which are historically valuable to-day. Among the English views are pictures of Yarmouth, the Isle of Wight, Dublin and Cowes and the English castles of Windsor, Kenilworth and Guy's Cliff. All of these have a border in which flowers and grapes with vines are introduced and the edge has a twisted scroll. At the back of each plate within a ribbon scroll the name of each view is given.

As the views of America proved so popular and met with such a ready sale, Andrew Stevenson, who came later, went so far as to send an artist, Wall, to the country for the especial purpose of making sketches of prominent buildings and well known scenes, and of these there is a ten inch platter of Brooklyn Heights which is very rare. As a rule his views had a floral border in which roses predominated.

In addition there were also many English views used, which, though not especially valuable from a historic standpoint, yet are of good color and are useful for wall decorations or to include in the cabi-

Plates By Tams Anderson and Tams.

A Cup by Stevenson and a Rogers Plate.

British Views of Old Staffordshire Ware.

AFAVORITE subject with the Clews brothers, who bought out Andrew Stevenson, is the "Landing of La Fayette." Altogether there is quite a large quantity of La Fayette china in the country. It is known, among other peculiarities, by a beautiful border of leaves and flowers, the same design being used for the States plates. In the latter the border is festooned and bears the names of the fifteen States, and between the festoons are five or eight pointed stars. There are probably twelve of the States views showing the White House at Washington, Mount Vernon, the Custom House and others.

It was Clews who turned out the famous "Dr. Syntax" designs. These were amusing and humorous pictures copied from a set designed by Thomas Rowlandson, one of the most celebrated designers of the day and depicted Dr. Syntax in "Search of a Wife."

Strange to say, the subjects for pottery designs were not always what one might have selected. For example, among the "Beauties of America" dinner service made by J. & W. Ridgway, famous potters, were included numerous almshouses and hospitals as being representative of the points of interest in this country.

WHILE all Staffordshire pottery is beautiful, some of the medallion pitchers made by Ralph Stevenson, of which there are a number of designs, are very beautiful. Nearly all his designs have a vine leaf border and are exceedingly ornamental. One of the finest platters shows Bunker Hill, the border being somewhat unusual in that it is pierced with holes. Among the plates are those showing designs of the Lawrence Mansion, Boston; City Hall, New York, and Scudder's American Museum, where P. T. Barnum first started as a showman. All of these, as in the case of the university designs, are eagerly snapped up.

To the novice the willow pattern is one of the most prized designs, but to the seasoned collector it is worse than useless, for, in the first place, the design has nothing to recommend it, and, second, there is any quantity of it to be had. It is one of the things that china hunters have to meet, for there is a general impression prevailing among those who possess it, but who do not know old china, that it is priceless. The fact is it has little or no value. This was made by J. & J. Rilet.

One set of plates that is in demand bears the arms of the States. They are very ornamental and bring a good price. They were made by Thomas Stubbs, the pottery later being sold to T. Mayer, with whose insignia they are marked. The potter Stubbs also owned the Dale Hall works, at Burslem, and the feature of his pieces was a scroll border in which net with others of greater note. These potters turned out some interesting views of private residences in London, besides a series of university views.

The Ridgway pieces can be distinguished by a pointed oval about three inches long on the back of each piece with the words, "Opaque China, J. & W. Ridgway." The name of the view is printed in the centre of each mark, and the border is generally a wreath of convolvuli with medallions at regular intervals depicting boys playing with goats.

A LARGE number of American views were put forth by William Adams, and his china can be distinguished by a printed blue eagle, which grasps a twig in one claw and four arrows and darts in the other. The only American design in dark blue which the elder Adams produced was a picture of the old china warehouse of Mitchell & Freeman, which stood at a corner in Chatham street, Boston. It has a handsome foliage border, with the ever present pine tree on the left, to distinguish it from the foliage border of other makers. He also made an extensive series depicting Columbus' experiences on landing in America. But these are in red, purple, green and black.

One of the few old blue designs by the Rogers brothers was that of the Boston State House, but while the border is floral in character it is distinguished from others by the roses and forget-me-nots that are a part of the design. There is also a pitcher with a view of City Hall, New York, that is in demand.

Besides these famous old potters there were many others who turned out a few pieces each of blue Staffordshire that were historical and which are sought for by collectors to-day. In other colors and other pieces there is to be found a wealth of beauty, but it is advisable for a girl who is just starting to make a collection to keep to the blue ware, for it is not only less difficult to secure, but, from a decorative standpoint, is more taking.

There is a very particular mark by which the truly antique china can be told from the modern, and that is the presence of three small round spots in the glaze near the margin and equidistant from each other. They are formed by the triangles—bits of fire clay—that are used to separate the pieces when in the kiln. The marks are always on the face and are a valuable means of identification.

For the Girl Who Sews.

GIRLS who have been taking domestic science courses at fashionable boarding schools declare that to get along without a variety of dainty aprons is an impossibility, especially if the embryo housekeeper wishes to preserve the fronts of her frocks from spots.

One girl who sews almost as well as she cooks is making several aprons of plain lawn cut into half ovals, scalloped all round with a color and embroidered with washable floss in outline or shadow stitch. By this means she expects to have luncheon pinafores to accord with every house frock—white embroidered with pale blue; pink, mauve or yellow and dark blue; green and brown relieved with white.

Charming little aprons of half oval, half round, diamond or oblong shape are to be made of finest nainsook, scalloped all round and hand embroidered with white in imitation of the work done in the Madeira Islands.

All of the ruffle bordered aprons are fascinating, particularly the round ones which have bowknot and leaf designs embroidered on the lower curve and girdle belts which fit trimly, have embroidered fronts and tie in a little bowknot at the back. The same model is pretty when the hand embroidery and ruffle are omitted and the hemstitched edge is finished with an inch wide frill of Valenciennes or Cluny lace.

Bretelle aprons are always coquettish and nearly always become a slender, girlish figure, but they are more difficult to make than pinafores, because the centre panel with its square little bib should be carefully curved to fit into the figure at the waist line and on to it should be attached the narrower side panels, which are shaped above the waist into straps crossing the shoulders and then across the top of the back, where they are joined, so that the apron may be adjusted by drawing the bretelle portion over the head and then securing it about the waist with pink, blue or white satin ribbon sashes.

Nearly all of the bretelle aprons have cunning little hip pockets headed with fine muslin embroidery or lace edging to match the bordering of the pinafore, bib and shoulders, and if a girl wishes to make this sort of luncheon apron exceptionally elaborate she may have the bretelles entirely of all over lace and let them run into narrow panels from the waist to the lower edge.

Practical aprons, meaning the sort which are to be put on over the frock when preparing salad dressing and really mussy concoctions, are made of striped galatea, percale, gingham or madras, and are put on as easily as is an ulster, for they fasten with flat buttons down the left front from shoulder to hem, have big sewed in sleeves with band cuffs and a deep patch pocket on each hip. To make one take as a model any narrow skirted, one piece house frock which closes in front, allowing, however, for slightly wider seams and wider shoulders, so that the garment will go over even a velvet frock if desired.

IT has been wisely said that whoever has once mastered the art of the simpler forms of Irish crochet work has at command an endless variety of ways in which to utilize the product of the tiny steel hook. Above all, the roses of fine imported Irish lace thread can be applied in so many dainty and original ways that the girl of wisdom finds them an invaluable resource when designing for herself those small accessories which give the keynote of a costume.

For articles of fine linen or of any wash material the roses of the Irish thread are, naturally, the sort to use. But on silk or cloth those crocheted from a twisted silk make charming and unique variants from passementerie. A girl who loves to experiment with such useful arts has just finished for herself a little girdle which is the admiration of all who see it. The foundation at the back is a shaped piece of crinoline or some such stiffened lining about eight inches wide. This is covered with the white crêpe de Chine of which the girdle is made and trimmed with "up and down" rows of white silk roses. To each end of the shaped back section the soft front pieces of the girdle are shirred, and these are long enough to join in a graceful knot in front and to fall sashlike almost to the edge of the dress skirt, where they are finished with a triplet of silken crocheted blossoms apiece, from the centre of each of which hangs a tassel of the same white silk.

This same girl has crocheted more elaborate motifs of pale rose silk for her sister's pet dancing frock of the same shade and a set of handsome black silk—unlike anything to be found in the shops—for a well beloved aunt, whose dinner gown they will shortly adorn most attractively.

Trifles of Interest to the Young Girl.

ALMOST acceptable birthday gift for the short woman or girl friend who habitually goes about in a limousine or any other type of motor car is the foot rest, which not only prevents the body from slipping about the seat because the feet cannot reach the brass foot bars but keeps the person from getting fatigued during the course of a long drive.

The foot rest is merely a box with a slanting lid, and while the cost of one perfectly equipped with luncheon and toilet sets and covered in the proper manner is so great that to have one of them is decidedly a luxury, any girl who will have a slant lidded box of the proper size built by a carpenter may do the rest of the work and derive considerable pleasure from the task.

If the limousine for which the foot rest is intended is upholstered, for instance, with claret colored cloth, then the box would best be covered with claret colored broadcloth, morocco, enamelled leather or sealskin, tacked on with small nails with black, claret, gilt or silver heads. If the box is a small one, just wide enough to support a single pair of feet, it may be lined daintily with padded satin, as it will then be expected to hold only the minor toilet articles—a silver or brass or celluloid mounted whisk broom, clothes brush, hat brush, hand mirror and manicure set.

But if the box is large enough to provide rest for two pairs of feet then it should be lined with white oilcloth and divided into two compartments, one for the luncheon equipage and the other for the implements which a woman needs when she tidies herself just before the termination of a long drive.

TO resort to the miniature bank system of saving money may seem just a bit childish, but it is a good way for the girl who wants some article of dress, jewelry or furniture very much indeed to accumulate the price of it. The only sure manner of keeping the small pieces of money which are being saved is to drop them into the sort of bank which is not readily opened. One girl who saved enough money during last summer to buy her fur set for this winter dropped all of the spare quarters, dimes and nickels into a little bank which opens automatically when filled to capacity. The girl confessed that times innumerable she would have robbed that bank could she have broken into it, but had she been able to do so the money for the furs would not have been saved.

Lacking an automatic opening bank, the best method of saving small coin is to sew the lid onto a moderately sized box, then paste over the whole affair a cover of taffeta, velvet or satin and make in the top a slit just large enough to permit the passage of a dime. Having made such a bank, endeavor to keep the resolution to drop into it every dime received in change. Dimes accumulate with amazing rapidity, and as to get even one of them out of this doorless and windowless bank means that the receptacle must be smashed, the owner of it will be very much in need of change before she deliberately decides to become a bank wrecker. She will know when the psychological moment for using the savings has arrived because their bulk and weight will cause the bursting of the frail paper and fabric structure.

A girl who has a small metal safe which locks places its tiny key on her father's watch chain, because she knows that no matter how hard she may plead with him her parent will not unlock the safe until it is filled with coins.

FOR a traveller who is taking a long voyage and who is rather delicate in health a gift which will be heartily appreciated during the long hours spent in her deck chair is a set of two pillows and a "knapsack" to match of some smooth, heavy material that an occasional splash with salt water will not injure.

Cravenetted material, of a color to harmonize with the traveller's rug, is a good choice, as, being impervious to casual wettings, the feathers of the pillows will be less apt to suffer than if something more absorbent were used. The pillow to support the head should be about half a yard square and should have strong straps at the upper corners by which to hang it over the chair top. For this pillow an extra cover of smooth linen or silk should be provided, so that the face may not come in contact with the woollen goods. This slip cover should fasten securely with buttons or snap fasteners.

The second pillow is to tuck in at the small of the back, and should be about ten by fifteen inches. This, too, may have an extra cover, if desired, in case it is to be used at other times, but it is not really necessary. This smaller pillow should be quite soft and yielding.

The knapsack is merely a capacious flat bag with a stout strap by which it can hang on the corner of the chair, to hold one's books and the small sundries which a traveller likes to have near at hand. It should have a couple of small inside pockets and a flap to fasten down over all in case of accident. On each of these articles the traveller's initial or monogram should be heavily embroidered in a shade of silk just enough lighter or darker than the groundwork to be visible without being conspicuous. The knapsack strap can be adjustable, that it may be slipped over the shoulder for convenience in carrying.

UNBOUND sheet music will stay open on the desk without trouble, but when one must study from a book of bound pages the nuisance of having a page flop over long before you reach it is more than a little upsetting to nerves and attention. To obviate this difficulty bands of silk elastic can be made in pairs to fit over the "up and down" margins on each side of the book and retain the offending leaves so that turning over out of order is impossible.

If the leaves on the part yet to be played be left slightly loose, turning over when the right time comes will be found but little more trouble. The same clever contrivance can be used to hold open any book from which one is studying or to which it is necessary to refer, and the elastic bands are far less likely to injure the book than the common practice of holding it open with another book, or with a weight of some sort.

Suggestions for the Costume.

IT was the picture in a recent home magazine of a pretty removable sailor collar of two shades of satin that suggested to an inventive little lass a most attractive gift to make for an older sister. Oddly enough, it was neither a sailor collar nor of two shades of satin. It was a large collar shaped "protector" to wear over the neck and shoulders of her sweet little evening and dinner gowns under the evening wrap, which sometimes parted and let a chill wind catch a somewhat sensitive breast. Scarfs, she had heard the dear sister remark, never seemed to stay in place and they were apt to bunch and be bulky. The illustration was a distinct inspiration.

She quickly abstracted a collar pattern which had been especially well fitting and by it cut what really might be considered a sailor collar but for the long curve of it instead of the square corners of a cherished piece of pearl colored brocade for the lining and of palest sea green messaline for the outer section. Instead of ending in front the protector was cut with ends so long that they would cross in front, finished with half rosettes that would hook together into one at the back of the waist line, thus keeping the chest well covered under all circumstances.

The interlining was of fine silk flannel, giving warmth without loss of lightness and without bulk. Where revers would come, if it had been a coat collar, she added rather wide ones, faced with the brocade, on the under lapels of which were silk buttons and a silken cord loop, so that in time of extra need for warmth the revers could be folded across the chest and fastened securely. While it is a simple arrangement, it has proved itself valuable beyond all pricing and has saved the wearer so much discomfort that she holds it one of her dearest possessions.

NOT so long ago every girl was making for herself neck chains, long and short, of beads of every conceivable color and size. Delicious little collars of amber and aquamarine were fashioned by slim fingers that gained skill in handling the elusive tiny things. Now this skill is to prove of value in a new line, and the girl who is wise will hunt over portfolios of old Italian masterpieces and therein gain many unique ideas for the new caps, or, rather, nets of beads, to be worn over her wavy locks at the theatre, with her tea gown—in short, for all sorts of dressy uses, to complete the color scheme of her prettiest gowns.

The simplest pattern is, of course, that of ordinary fish net, the strings of tiny pearls or silver beads being joined to form diamond shaped meshes. But with the great variety of these fascinating materials to choose from and the accurately depicted headdress of some lovely Beatrice or Caterina or Bianca to inspire her, it will go hard but she shall evolve most artistic and novel "caps" for herself, quite unlike anything to be purchased ready made.

Combinations of the beaded nets, in jewelled effect, with bits of brocade or embroidered satin, will result in a rich effect, quite out of proportion to the actual cost of the working materials, did the admiring observer but guess it. And one most delightful little capote was fashioned of a scrap of pale blue silk, with a beaded pattern in tiny silver points, finished with a net of the same beads in larger size.

FOR the girl who wants a touch somewhat newer than the ever widening jabot frill fastening on the opposite shoulder there is a charming variation which she can easily fashion for herself, and that is the frill which turns back and falls in graceful softness downward from the edge of coat front or surplice drapery of her blouse, instead of being laid across to cover the upper part of the garment.

For a velvet waist there is nothing prettier, as the dark material sets off the fine needlework or delicate lace of the falling frill to far greater advantage than when it is arranged in conjunction with a light colored or white guimpe or chemisette.

These frills are quite as varied in outline as their predecessors, and can be narrow at the top and widen toward the waist line, hanging several inches below it, or they can widen toward the shoulder line, suggesting the fichu, but on one side only. They can be of chiffon or of the finest hemstitched linen, of fine silk net with a hem heading of handwork in color. In fact, there is no limit to their many variations, even white silk fringe cleverly hand knotted by one ingenious girl having been used with most "fetching" result.